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Editorial Statement from Ye Olde Uberwench On High

First things first. Hampshire is a graveyard for music, dances, and newspapers. What we have here is a school that brings in a few bands a semester, a conglomerate of techno-pop vogue fests, and the biggest sucker trap for anyone trying to slip by with a journalism major since Clark Kent went to work for the Daily Planet. An experimental potpourri with lots of ideas and a chaos emblem for a logo. An editor who writes in fragments and tries to rally together a Y.A.H.N. (yet another Hampshire newspaper) on a piddling budget of \$250 and an attitude.

So. What's the point of pulling a thesis-99 and nailing this to the door of your mod, littering up your lounge, or violating your bathroom? Blame Pandora and the fact that I have the tiniest scintilla of hope that this might work. Yes, folks, here you have it-- in the grand tradition of Longworth, Patterson, and the like--The Making of a Newspaper.

But here. Let's begin the begin. Point-- a newspaper will never both survive and be of vital interest to the community at this college. It's no-man's land out there. Stick something in front of people's noses, and yeah, they might just read it, might cover it with grease-soaked fingers over a grinder at Saga, but does anybody really care? Counterpoint--the Omen is not a newspaper. Call us a rag, a screamsheet, a newsletter. I prefer the term "newsmagazine," slightly more professional, probably undeserved, but at least it gives us something to shoot for.

What you have here at The Omen is a bunch of malcontents sick to death of the Examiner, sick to death of whatever else might be proffered in the name of news by the Administration or the like, and eager to create some interest out of the apathy and intrigue that run unchecked at this school. Believe it or not, things do go on here. Bands play to half-filled rooms of people trying to mosh in a raging torrent of ten people, scandals go house in an environment where no one really knows the real story, opinions get scrawled on walls and sidewalks due to the lack of a

proper forum for rage and opinions. Hampshire is chock-filled with conflicts, concepts, projects, and events, all coalescing in a swirl of half-heard rumor and gossip. Twelve hundred or so students can rake up a lot of interest and activity, and maybe, just maybe, a little two-bit rag can try to get everyone at least informed about what everyone else is doing.

Why bother? Good question. Personally, well, as Citizen Kane said, "I think it might be fun to run a newspaper." But beyond that, I think there is a definite need for a stump, a soapbox, that comes out regularly and fairly frequently, to get the news out in time for it to be acted upon and reacted about. The more Hampshire students I get to know, the more I pick up on a certain sense of misplacement and alienation at this establishment. We all possess a small fragment of what this place is about, but there is no feeling of general mutuality to bring us together. Yes--we need a football team!!!

Right.

And so, to punish all you potential jocks out there for not doing your civic duty by donning a helmet and bringing us all together in a radiating skirl of unity and spirit, I am going to force you instead to be a part of this project. If nothing else, by reading it, but hopefully, something about The Omen will catch your mind and inspire you to write about your own news, your own opinions, your own cheesy artwork and personal revelations. People at Hampshire will care if you make them.

Join the struggle. Solidarity forever.

And remember, it's either The Omen contriving to make us all a little more aware of each other, or Community Work.

Yick.

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The Omen

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Saga Employees Divulge Deepest Secrets

By Sara Gaiser

Back at the beginning of the year, when all the work-study students were looking for a decent job, the threat uttered at the orientation meeting was enough to spur most into frantic action: "Move fast, or you'll be stuck working at Saga." Those not on work study were faced with the fact that Saga is the only place on campus that consistently hires non-work study students. In either case, working for Saga was something of a last resort or an unpleasant necessity for most of those who ended up working there.

According to the Saga employees I interviewed, all of whom have been or were there for at least one semester, it isn't quite as bad as everyone thinks. There are some fairly strict rules: even employees need their ID to get in, uniforms are required, and everything, including desserts and salt shakers, must be set out in exactly the position mandated by the Marriot manual. But speaking as someone who worked for Pizza Hut last summer (owned by the megacorporation PepsiCo, in case you didn't know, as are Taco Bell and Kentucky Fried Chicken), I can tell you those are fairly minimal restrictions compared to the rulebook I had to memorize. Anyone who's worked a minimum wage job knows how tight managers can be, but apparently the Marriot staff is easy-going and friendly. Ivan, who has worked three years at Saga, says he has stayed so long because he's never found a more relaxed work environment.

At every meal, the Saga board fills with com-

plaints and comments (not to mention a few desperate personal ads), and is then wiped clean. Does the Marriot staff pay attention? Although one of the employees to whom I spoke when I asked that question looked at me like I had made a bad joke, two others thought Marriot makes a real effort to give students what they want, especially if a reasonable request is repeated many times by different people (that's a tip for any crusaders). Esther said the management often asks what she thinks of the vegetarian dishes, and that her offer of recipes for vegan desserts was accepted enthusiastically. Both she and Ivan mentioned that experiments are in the works, including woks set up so that students can make their own stir-fries and make-your-own waffle bars. Sounds good, but I am already dreading the lines.

The biggest complaint I heard from all the workers was cleaning up the smoking room, which seems to attract the rowdiest and messiest students. Smokers have left junk in the coffeepot and food on the tables. According to Nouri, "They don't even have the courtesy to leave food sculptures, it's just a mess... broken glass, chairs scattered all around...cranberry juice all over the tables."

Saga work doesn't require a lot of thought, but it is exhausting, and most of the workers there said they would like to find a different job if they could, working for a teacher or as a building monitor. If they did, however, they wouldn't be able to wear those snappy maroon visors any more.

Another Financial Aid Failure

By Scarlett Hook

Hampshire was my second choice in colleges. I'll admit, it later became apparent that the little rejection slip from Yale University was a gift from someone or something ethereal, but there was a time when Camp Hamp was not my A number-one yes-yes school.

However, once I was accepted, I decided that I would, in fact, attend this lovely New England establishment of higher learning. I decided to come and see right back at that annoying Seeing Eye Frog, and learn about it all with the best of them. I was thrilled that I would be able to afford it. Even though my family's means were limited, I had read a veritable library of literature relating the wonders of Hampshire's generous Financial Aid Department, and was confident that I would not be hung out to dry. Hhhmm.

Along with an abundance of welcomes and forms, my acceptance packet harbored a bright red sheet of paper which politely informed me that my financial aid package was incomplete, and would I please phone to find out what

was missing, thank you. Having mailed in all the paperwork well before the deadline, I was disturbed. I called the next day, connected with Financial Aid, and discovered that my non-custodial parental statement was not on file. That is to say, my dad and step-mom's incomes, birth dates, pet of choice, and sexual preferences, etc., etc. had not arrived from Chicago even though they had mailed it several weeks previously. Ironically enough, the infamous Yale had received their copy.

I was immediately calmed from my worried state, and assured that if my parents were to mail another one, there was plenty of time for a substantial financial package to be worked out. I called the following day, prattled off my dad's address in the Windy City, and hung up the phone, happy as a Saga-goer on waffle bar day, naively thinking that all would be well. Ahem.

A week passed before my father received the replacement form. Roughly eighteen hours passed before he mailed it out, completed, back up to Massachusetts. This time for real. About three weeks later, I

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received a nifty form letter that heralded the supreme honor of paying upwards of \$24,000 with the help of exactly zero dollars and zero cents from Hampshire College. My father's form had arrived post deadline. I was not happy, and neither was my family.

My parents tried negotiating, as did my guidance counselor, and my principal. However, we were told flat out that there was simply no money left. "Apply for aid again next year, and gee, it would be really great if you could squeeze the money from somewhere and come to Hampshire in the fall. No, no aid next semester either, that's all gone too."

Well, we all got together, looked at money saved, the doubled child support payments, a donation from grannie, etc. etc. We could afford the first semester, and I was off to college. It really blew the family's proverbial wad.

So I was here, and I loved it, and I wanted to come back in the spring. I needed money, however, for this endeavor—my summer earnings were hardly up to another twelve thousand. All four of my parents, both biological and step, were still banking large chunks of checks for me. I decided to bang on some Hampshire doors, in hopes of aid for the spring semester.

Basically, I got a lot of "That's a shame," "I'm so sorry," and such, but no money. I asked about the aid for students who did not return for the second half of the year, only to be informed that this money was already

earmarked for students returning in the spring who hadn't attended fall semester. Any remainder was to be swallowed up by a grossly unbalanced budget. I took up my plight with the head of Financial Aid, Kathleen Methot, and received answers that were no different. As a squeaky wheel, I was just not getting oiled.

As the end of the fall semester drew closer and closer, I became more and more desperate. I decided to seek out Larry Beede, the assistant Dean of Faculty, and present my case. I went on a Friday, kept my appointment in a congenial and punctual fashion, and gave him just the facts, ma'am. I was told that I would have a decision the following Monday.

Monday came and went: "Come back Tuesday." I did. "Try Wednesday." I did that, too. "You'll get a call this evening." I wasn't in, so I called back Thursday morning. I was awarded \$800-\$1000 in work study aid. That was it, and that was that.

On the phone with four parents, clutching calculators and bankbooks, I stressed and hoped and stressed some more. When all was said and done, money was squeezed from bank accounts that were mighty strapped already. Mortgage, hospital bills, blah, blah, when no one listens, you bite the bullet and shut up.

Now, a month later, I'm back at school, with a letter guaranteeing \$700 in work study aid. \$700 out of \$25,000... hmmm. Let's hear it for Financial Aid: hoo haw.

How to Survive in the Valley with No Money

By Matthew Schlotte

Another week, another search for a non-existent paycheck. Hi. I'm Matt, a vagrant, mendicant, bum, high school student, a pedestrian. I exist in a capitalistic society and refuse to make any money. Life is not easy for me but I know many people and this is what allows me to live. I meander the streets, sleep in the shadows, hang out at the colleges. As great as it might sound to some, the squalid have to work toward this lifestyle. Let me explain...

There are many types of "bums" (for lack of a better word). I embody one of these stereotypes, and I'm here to explain our existence. I am what is known as a moocher or leech. Now these are cruel words, yes. I get my food and shelter from others. Yet I do not ask or beg. Others offer to me and I say no. Then they insist I stay or accept food. I do not look for people or situations to mooch from. I know what is free. I know the territory. The Valley is a wealth all unto itself. The buses are free. The colleges have many buildings which stay open late and if you hang out at these institutions long enough you eventually meet people. They become intrigued by your story (life). These college students might offer food or bring you to a party. College seminars, some large classes and lectures, can all be walked in on. This allows you to learn something for nothing. There are plenty of hideaway niches in parks, colleges, apartment buildings, and cemeteries to sleep in,

and they're not patrolled (hopefully). And society thinks nothing is free nowadays. Free food is another story, but if you're like me, a townie or local, you know where the parties are and what friends don't mind if you make yourself a sandwich before you leave.

As I said in the opening, that I and others have to work at our lifestyle of street level. This is true. I spend a lot of time keeping in contact with the people I know for my style of bumhood relies on this. Now don't get me wrong. I enjoy being with my friends. But it can run you ragged. Plus of course every now and then I get caught by cops sleeping on a bench or loitering and for these instances it helps to have a good accurate knowledge of the laws. Knowing societies laws has kept me out of trouble a time or two. I get harassed by some elements of the working class. Those who see me as a lying scheming stealing bastard are laboring under a misconception. If you are a friend I will do what I can for you. I will not blackmail or steal and I have no need to lie to my friends. I also live knowing that by "the standards" I am lowly and scum. I am below you, the reader. I am not worthy to be seen with. Matt Schlotte is not someone you shed a tear over. Tomorrow I can be here or not. The colleges, the towns, the Valley, the world would never notice...this is how I live?

Boycott Courtesy Cab Company

By Charlotte Smith

Jan Term is over, I have returned to Hampshire, and the horrors that are visited on me at the end of every semester won't be back until May. I'm not talking about papers here, what I'm speaking of is the terrible, terrible hassle of getting home. You see, I don't live on the East Coast when I'm not at Hampshire.

Getting home at semester break and over summer is tough on everyone, granted, but for those of us who live out of driving distance, there's a special assortment of problems, both avoidable and un-

My first Jan Term was fairly painless. I packed a few duffel bags, grabbed my plane ticket, and went. The real problems with having all your property across the country from your house didn't surface until the summer.

Three boxes allotted by Dakin storage. Some space in a rental unit kindly given to me by a friend with a car. And half a ton of clothes and books and personal effects with no home for the summer. The day before I left found me UPSing my life cross-country at a phenomenal price rate, and fall found me sending it all back the same way, with another few hundred bucks blown. Oh joy.

It was this December that I nearly reached the breaking point. Since I intended to take a number of off-campus courses in the fall, I had, like an idiot, planned to leave late; in fact, the day after they lock and chain the doors at Hampshire. That day I took a final at Smith, surrounded by my luggage, a hamster, and sweating test takers, and then checked into an Amherst motel.

There I tackled the question of the hamster. I had

bought this cute furry little person as company for my study evenings, but he was starting to look more like a ball and chain every minute. You can take dogs, cats, birds, and miniature ponies in the cabin of a commercial airline flight, but you can't take a hamster. Huh? Ookaay.

Finally, I arranged to board the hamster with a local vet. All right! All I have to do is get a cab to the vet, come back to the hotel, get on Valley Transport, and go to the airport...except that the Courtesy Cab Company, when I called back fifteen minutes after the cab should have arrived, wasn't coming. Ever. They lost my business permanently. The schmuck who told me that I would get no cab in a disinterested drawl may since have had a partial hearing loss in whichever ear my scream of rage and frustration went into.

I must admit that I felt a touch of envy for people who can just put their pet in a car and drive to Connecticut, when I finally left the hamster at the motel to be picked up and driven to the vet by the Valley Transport shuttle before catching my own ride.

Last night, I lurched up the stairs to my dorm room loaded down with luggage, and thanking the Lord for the absence of rodents.

Most of this was not Hampshire's fault, true. It was just a hassle. Hampshire does tend to assume, though, that all of its students live in New England and can get home any time they choose, and all their possessions with them. And, in May, I'm going to be smuggling the hamster through the airport in a Hampshire College mug. I predict excitement. Stay tuned.

Bleeding Heart Dance

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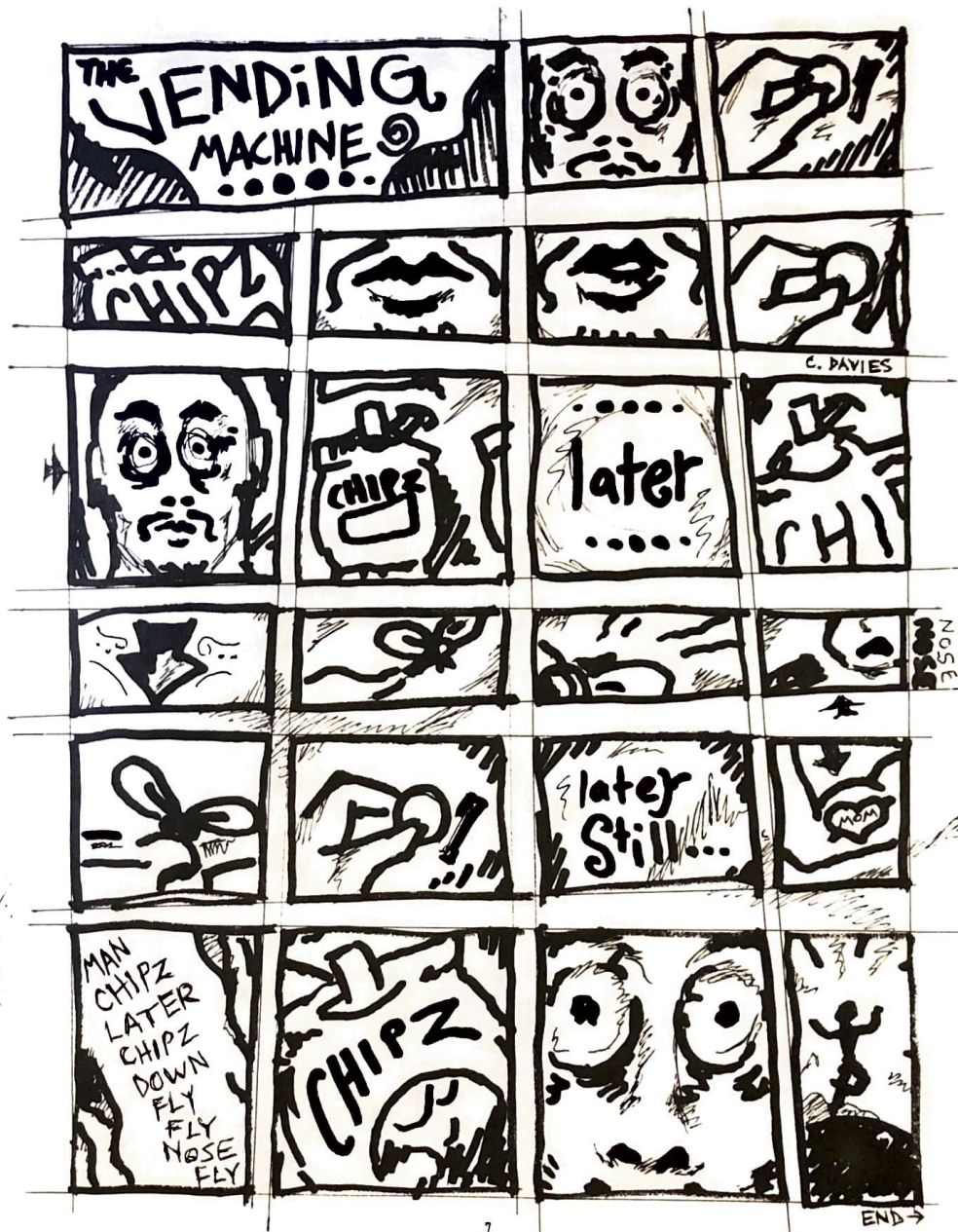
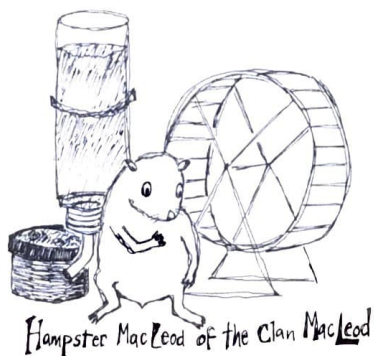
Majel Barrett

Star Trek: The Next Generation's "Q"

"Nurse Chapel", Star Trek
"Lwaxana Troi", Star Trek: The Next Generation



6



THE LESS CONTROL I HAVE, THE LESS ACCOUNTABILITY I HAVE.

Notice that this issue
is a bit **PARSE?**

Contribute. We need your
News. Send stuff to

BOX 465

And we will print it. Spoon!

